

Advisory For Sheep Farming



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- ❖ Majority of sheep in India breed round the year.
- ❖ Purchase healthy breeding stock with two teeth.
- ❖ Breed mature female sheep once they attain 1.0 – 1.5 years age or 15 kg body weight.
- ❖ For profitable farming, 100 sheep must produce 80 young animals for sale in a breeding cycle of 8 months.
- ❖ In flock, replace the males once in 2 years or after attaining 4 years of age. Females are breed up to 7 years of age.
- ❖ Rear one breeding male to every 20 - 25 adult females.
- ❖ Infertile sheep without history of delivery for one year should be culled.
- ❖ Sheep with a history of broken mouth and chronic lameness must be culled at regular intervals.
- ❖ Adult sheep requires 2 kg green and 0.5 kg dry fodder and 200 gram concentrate feed daily.
- ❖ Additional mineral-mixture supplementation is essential when concentrate feed is not available.
- ❖ Feeding 300 g of concentrate per sheep per day for three weeks before mating (“flushing”) result in multiple births.
- ❖ Sheep carrying multiple fetus (Avishaan and NARI Suvarana) need to be offered extra 300 gram feed in last month of gestation. This will improve ewe’s milk production, birth weight and growth during early part of life.
- ❖ Poor nutrition to pregnant sheep bearing multiple fetus lead to pregnancy toxemia. Sheep suffering with pregnancy toxemia show the signs of blindness, stand at one place or become recumbent in severe case.
- ❖ Cultivate fodder trees like sesbania, gliricidia and neem as an emergency fodder source during scarcity.
- ❖ Always feed the sheep in a feeding trough at shoulder height to avoid wastage.
- ❖ Sheep farm should be at an elevated area having ample access to the air and sun light.
- ❖ An adult sheep require a covered floor space of 12 square feet per animal. The recommended open floor space is 24 square feet per sheep.
- ❖ Ideal sheep shed dimension is 25 feet wide and 12 feet height. Length varies depending upon the animal numbers.
- ❖ The side wall should be 3 - 4 feet high to protect sheep from wind draft especially to protect newborns from cold and chilly weather. Sheep house and other necessities for sheep rearing should be made from locally available low cost resources.
- ❖ Keep the flooring dry especially in monsoon. To prevent footrot, give foot bath with 10% zinc sulphate or 3% formalin in water during monsoon.
- ❖ Loosen the hardened soil once in 3 months and remove 6-inch floor hard cakes from surface every year preferably in summer and replace with fresh soil. This will control parasitic egg load in soil bed.
- ❖ Waterers should be lime-washed every month.
- ❖ Healthy sheep looks alert, active, ruminating and should have shiny hair coat.
- ❖ Animal should be free from nasal and eye discharge, no cough, diarrhoea, lumps and external parasites on the skin.
- ❖ A healthy flock must have less than 5% mortality. Abortion rate must be less than 3% and needs systematic investigation if increases above 5%.



- ❖ Majority of deaths in newborn happens in first 48 hours after birth. Proper health care of young ones during first 2 days increases their survivability, growth and profitability.
- ❖ The most common infectious diseases in sheep are Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Enterotoxaemia (ET). The less common disease are Sheep pox, Johnes disease, Colibacillosis, Bluetongue, Orf, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Footrot, Mange, and Brucellosis.
- ❖ Consult Veterinary doctor to know the prevalence of diseases in your locality and needful vaccination and deworming.
- ❖ Vaccinate against ET and HS once in every 4 to 6 months, while for PPR once in 3 years.
- ❖ Sheep graze close to the ground and are prone to worm infection. Deworm as and when required. Change the dewormer every time to overcome resistance. In the region with high parasitic load, follow two dewormer treatments annually (i.e., before mating and at the end of pregnancy) is advised.
- ❖ Do not handle the pregnant sheep too frequently. Avoid overcrowding, starvation and stress-inducing management practices (transportation, vaccination, deworming and shearing) during early pregnancy to prevent embryonic loss.
- ❖ Delivery shed should have soft and clean bedding.
- ❖ Delivery lasts one hour. Any delay in the process requires assistance or Veterinary aid.
- ❖ After birth, clean the nostrils and dry the newborn with a clean towel. Ligate and sever the umbilical cord and apply tincture iodine to prevent naval infection.
- ❖ Assist the young one to suckle the colostrum at the earliest preferably within 30 minutes for high survivability and growth. Ensure proper suckling of all young ones regularly.
- ❖ Identify and restrain sheep having poor mothering ability to establish suckling and bonding with their young ones. Orphan young ones are fed with surrogate mothers' milk or preferably goat milk. If mother's milk is not sufficient, milk replacer developed by ICAR-NIANP can be used.
- ❖ Avoid frequent handling or change of place in first 1 - 2 hrs after birth to establish bonding. Allow newborns to remain with mothers round the day for initial 3 - 7 days.
- ❖ Provide a warm microenvironment to young ones that are born weak or born with two or more young ones.
- ❖ The mothers and newborns should be protected from stray dogs and other predators.
- ❖ Young sheep lick soil and are prone to worms and infection. Hence, provide straw bedding to the young growing sheep.
- ❖ Sheep young ones are discontinued to suckle once they attain 3 months of age.

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